

Virginia Department of Social Services  
Division of Licensing Programs  
Child Welfare Unit

Program Description Instructions for Children's Residential Facilities

Your program description is an important document that needs to be thought through carefully. The program description describes what you plan to do and how you plan to do it. Without a clearly written program description we cannot determine if VDSS is appropriate to be your regulatory authority.

- Please use the 4 headings listed below in writing your program description.
- Answer all questions under the heading using complete sentences.
- Be as specific as possible. (e.g. "qualified staff" is not adequate -explain how the staff is qualified, "residents will be assessed" is not enough information - tell us how residents will be assessed – using what criteria, etc.)
- Be sure that information included under the 4 headings is related (e.g. services provided should be suitable for population served, staff qualifications should match population served and services offered, etc.)
- Make sure that job descriptions are specific to your program. Do not merely repeat the requirements of the standards.
- **Do not send additional material such as policies and procedures.**
- Do not send the program descriptions in a binder or notebook.
- Include a name and address where return correspondence should be sent. A phone number for questions is also helpful.

1. MAIN FOCUS OF PROGRAM - What issue or problem is this program addressing? What will a resident come away with by being placed in this proposed program?

2. DESCRIPTION OF POPULATION TO BE SERVED (i.e. girls ages 15-18 is not a thorough description) – Describe what types of youth and what types of problems, behavior, disability groups or DSM IV diagnoses you will accept and not accept, including age and gender. Also include the capacity of your proposed program. From where will these children be placed – psychiatric hospitals, foster homes, etc. Include admission and discharge criteria. Discharge criteria should include more than "when the resident completes the program".

3. SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED - What will be offered to the resident? How will the type of resident you described in #2 be served? What will be accomplished by placing a child in this program? What is this program offering that a placing agency would be willing to pay for? For example, stating the program will offer Independent Living Services is not an adequate description. What curriculum will be used? What skills will be taught? How will it be determined on what skills the resident needs to work? How will the skills be taught? How will the resident be continually assessed? Include evidence that there is a structured program of care. What is the position title of the person to

provide the service? Explain all point or level systems if applicable. Also include a daily schedule showing when services will be offered. Indicate if the service is to be provided at the facility or if residents will be taken to someone in the community for the service.

How will educational services be provided? Please be advised that school divisions are not required to serve children from other school districts unless the child is in foster care and is in the custody of the local department of social services. If a foster care child has been expelled for a weapons or drug charge, the school division does not have to serve that child. School systems are required to serve special education children but are only required to provide what is on the individualized education plan (IEP). For example if a child's IEP says he should receive speech only, then that is all the school division is obligated to provide. IN OTHER WORDS, JUST BECAUSE YOU ACCEPT A CHILD TO BE A RESIDENT IN YOUR PROGRAM DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE CHILD CAN ATTEND THE NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL. If the local school division refuses to serve a child what is your alternative educational plan? Have you talked to the local school division about serving the children in your program if the educational plan is for the residents to attend the local public school?

4. JOB DESCRIPTIONS OF STAFF TO BE HIRED – Job descriptions for all direct care staff (chief administrative officer, program director, child care supervisors, child care workers, social workers, etc.) must be included. Use the same position titles as used in the program description. What kind of qualifications will staff have (LCSW or other certifications, college degrees, work experience)? Make sure that all positions meet the requirements of the Virginia Department of Social Services. Indicate which position will provide case management. Please also include the name of the person who will be serving as the chief administrative officer and the person's resume.

Send to:

[Lafond.blount@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:Lafond.blount@dss.virginia.gov)

or

VDSS, Division of Licensing Programs  
Child Welfare Unit  
7 N. Eighth Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Richmond, Virginia 23219  
Attn: Lafond Blount

## Program Description Checklist

**Before sending your program description to the Child Welfare Unit, ensure it is complete.**

<b>Main Focus</b> states specifically what type of program is being offered (i.e. treatment, training, education, independent living, etc.)	
<b>Description of Population</b> includes:	
Gender served	
Proposed capacity	
Ages served	
Behaviors that will be accepted	
Behaviors that will not be accepted	
DSM IV categories accepted, if applicable	
Admission and Discharge criteria	
A description that is specific, focused, and does not mix populations	
<b>Services</b> to be offered	
Do services match population to be served?	
Have you described the services including materials and curriculums, assessment tools, and methods to be used?	
Daily schedule showing times services will be offered (24 hours – 7 days per week)	
Description on how education will be provided	
Model of care	
<b>Job Descriptions</b>	
Includes job title	
Includes specific duties and responsibilities	
Includes job title of immediate supervisor	
Includes minimum education, experience, knowledge, skills and abilities required	
CAO's job description	
Program Director's job description	
Case Manager	
Anyone supervising child care workers	
Child Care Worker	
Job Descriptions are individualized to the program's population and services	
Resume of CAO	
Resume of program director, if identified	
Other	
A contact name, address, and telephone number	
No binders, notebooks, etc.	
No policies and procedures, no forms	